

## **I. Special Populations and Other Groups**

The Executive Committee of the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board approved procedures for compliance with Civil Rights Requirements for Title I Workforce Investment Act (WIA) programs and for One-Stop programs at its March 21, 2000, meeting. These procedures are included in this plan as Attachment I-1.

### **1. Strategies to Target and Serve Special Populations**

*[Federal Planning Guidance: Describe how your State will develop program strategies, to target and serve special populations. States may present information about their service strategies for those special populations that are identified by multiple Federal programs as they deem most appropriate and useful for planning purposes, including by special population or on a program by program basis.]*

The Arkansas Workforce Investment Board will coordinate and establish policy for conducting all employment and training activities within the workforce investment system created by the federal Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and Arkansas Act 1125 of 1999, including all activities conducted in and through Arkansas' One-Stop career centers.

The Arkansas Workforce Investment Board is committed to ensuring that the programs, services, and facilities of each One-Stop delivery system are accessible to all of Arkansas' workers, including individuals with disabilities. On January 11, 2000, the Workforce Investment Board discussed strategies to target and serve special populations. Many of these ideas, as well as suggestions from the public, are incorporated into this section.

To assist local workforce investment boards (LWIBs) in evaluating the accessibility of their programs, services, and facilities, the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board provided to each LWIB a copy of Training and Employment Information Notice (TEIN) No. 16-99, which includes 29 CFR Part 37, the Interim Final Rule for Implementation of the Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Provisions of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, plus several accessibility checklists. (See Attachment I-1) Methods and technology for ensuring program accessibility are described in detail in the "Supplement to Access Compliance Checklist" component of this attachment. As part of the One-Stop certification process, each LWIB must complete a self-evaluation and transition plan for all comprehensive and satellite One-Stop Centers in the local workforce investment area.

People with disabilities will not be routinely referred to the Division of Services for the Blind or Arkansas Rehabilitation Services for basic One-Stop services. People with disabilities will be served in a manner that is not different from the manner that services are provided to other One-Stop center patrons. One-Stop patrons with disabilities will also be informed about the services

available through these vocational rehabilitation agencies, and they will be referred to these agencies for disability-related services at the patron's request. The Arkansas Career System Partnership has purchased specialized equipment and software to serve people with disabilities, including materials for serving patrons with limited English proficiency. Patrons with limited English proficiency will receive services that comply with the provisions of 29 CFR 37.35.

### **PERKINS III (SECONDARY AND POSTSECONDARY) AND TECH PREP**

Over the past several years of Perkins, many strategies have been developed to help ensure success of special population students in vocational and technical education programs. In previous years, the law had special set-aside categorical funds for serving special populations and later the requirements mandated that the local recipients spend the funds in programs that enrolled the highest number or percent of special populations. Under Perkins III, those provisions have been removed; however, the results for each performance indicator must be disaggregated by the special population categories to show the outcomes for those students. The Arkansas Department of Workforce Education (ADWE) is strongly committed to providing service to all students and requires local recipients to report specifically on special populations. Details concerning specific populations and equitable access are given in I(1)(a) and I(3) below.

### **WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT TITLE I (YOUTH, ADULT, AND DISLOCATED WORKER)**

The Arkansas Workforce Investment Board is committed to universal access to appropriate services for all Arkansans. The staff of the State Board will ensure that each One-Stop meets the requirements for equitable universal access to services under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. While there are no eligibility requirements for individuals or businesses to receive core services, intensive and training services may be provided only to individuals who have not been able to obtain appropriate employment after receiving core services (and for training, after receiving intensive services). Local workforce investment boards (WIBs) are required to develop plans on how they will prioritize service recipients if there is not sufficient funding to serve everyone. The plans will be in accordance with federal regulations. Details concerning services to specific populations are given in I(b) below.

### **ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY**

The Arkansas Department of Workforce Education—Adult Education Section (ADWE-AES) has developed a number of strategies to address special populations groups. The Workforce Alliance for Growth in the Economy (WAGE) is a pre-employment program that targets unemployed and underemployed adults. Through a partnership of ADWE-AES with the Department of Human Services (DHS) basic skills remediation is provided for Transitional Employment Assistance

(TEA) clients who score below the ninth-grade level on the Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE). The ADWE-AES funds a program for adults at the Arkansas School for the Deaf.

ADWE-AES established a task force to guide a statewide training initiative in learning disabilities. This initiative has provided training for local adult education teachers and administrators, literacy tutors, and staff from the Department of Human Services, the Employment Security Department, and other agencies about learning disabilities.

Additional information concerning services for specific populations and equitable universal access to activities and programs are given in I(1)(c) and I(3) below.

#### **FOOD STAMP EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAM**

Recipients in Pulaski North service area are the only program participants who can participate in the program.

#### **TRADE ACT PROGRAMS**

The funds for these programs are available only to serve individuals determined eligible for Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) or North American Free Trade Act Transitional Adjustment Assistance (NAFTA/TAA) benefits. Potential participants are made aware of their potential eligibility through individual letters sent to affected workers, legal notices published in a newspaper of general circulation, through Governor's Dislocated Worker Workshops held when layoffs occur, through referrals from the Unemployment Insurance system, and through TAA workshops held when petitions are approved by the United States Department of Labor (USDOL). Affected workers also may be notified through a telephone call from one of their fellow laid-off workers hired by AESD to contact each worker and invite him/her to the initial workshop. Additional details concerning services to specific populations are given in I(1)(d) below.

#### **WAGNER-PEYSER ACT**

Wagner-Peyser resources are used for all individuals, with no eligibility limitations. There is priority of service for veterans, and those who are receiving unemployment insurance benefits constitute a major client group. Additional information is given in I(1)(d) below.

#### **VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM**

- **ARKANSAS REHABILITATION SERVICES**

The Rehabilitation Act defines special populations as minorities and Indian tribes with significant disabilities. Information concerning this population is given in I(1)(e) below. Program strategies include recruiting and hiring staff from minority backgrounds, performing outreach activities, a Cultural Diversity Task Force, education and training in diversity issues, and staff with or access to appropriate modes of communication including interpreters for the deaf and foreign languages. ARS is required to collect data on provision of services to these special populations as unserved and underserved, and to meet federal benchmarks of program performance. ARS exceeded the performance benchmarks in FY 1998. A discussion of the steps that ARS will take to ensure equitable universal to activities is in I(3) below.

- **DIVISION OF SERVICES FOR THE BLIND**

The Arkansas Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) places major emphasis on the need of consumers who are most significantly disabled as a priority for services. DSB also places priority on identifying and serving consumers who are minorities or who have traditionally been unserved or underserved. Because Arkansas has a rapidly growing population of culturally diverse individuals, DSB is developing and restructuring its policies and procedures to assure that the agency provides all applicants with needed information in a language and media of their choice.

DSB has obtained and disseminated directories of minority groups and organizations to each DSB field office. The small business directory has also been provided to each field office. The availability of this information to DSB staff creates the opportunity to offer and deliver services from a diverse provider pool. An added advantage to utilizing a diverse pool of providers is the creation of job opportunities for individuals who are blind and the increase in awareness of DSB services and programs.

The Division of Services for the Blind policies and procedures prohibit discrimination against individuals because of race, gender, national origin, color, disability or age. Individuals receiving services from DSB must meet the visual requirements to be eligible to receive vocational rehabilitation services. Additional information is provided in I(1)(e) and I(3) below.

## **VETERANS PROGRAMS**

The only populations served with these funds are veterans and certain family members of veterans who meet eligibility criteria. Information concerning veterans is addressed in I(1)(b) below.

## **UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

All eligible claimants are provided benefits, and there is no priority for specific groups. All covered employers are assessed taxes.

### **TANF**

The TEA program provides services on an individualized basis to any eligible family and does not specifically target special populations. However, some specialized referral procedures for families with specific needs, such as substance abuse problems or a domestic violence history, to appropriate service providers have been developed. In addition, a contract with Arkansas Rehabilitation Services is in place to address the needs of disabled parents. Additional information concerning specific populations is addressed in I(1)(f) below.

### **WELFARE-TO-WORK**

WtW funds may be used only for individuals declared eligible by DHS, using federal eligibility criteria.

### **SCSEP**

The SCSEP program is a special population. Outreach for workers is done in places with a high concentration of elders and also at places with high concentrations of low-income minority persons, such as senior centers and churches. Any literature about the services of an Area Agency on Aging contains information about this program as does literature on the programs of the Division of Aging and Adult Services. Additional information is given in I(1)(g) below.

### **COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT**

The local eligible entities are required to conduct a community needs assessment for their respective service area. This assessment is designed to address the needs of the citizens within their service area. The eligible entities are required to develop a service delivery system that is inclusive of low-income families, families and individuals receiving assistance under part A of the Social Security Act, homeless families and individuals, migrant or seasonal farm workers, elderly low-income individuals and families, and youth in low-income communities. Additional information concerning specific populations is given in I(1)(h) below.

### **(a) Perkins III:**

*[Federal Planning Guidance: If your unified plan includes Perkins III, please address the following specific relevant populations:*

- *Each category of special populations defined in Sec. 3(23) of the Act (§122(c)(7))*
- *Students in alternative education programs, if appropriate (§122(c)(13))*

- *Individuals in State correctional institutions (§122(c)(18))*

*i) Describe how funds will be used to promote preparation for nontraditional training and employment (§122(c)(17))*

*ii) Describe how individuals who are members of special populations will be provided with equal access to activities assisted under Title I of Perkins III and will not be discriminated against on the bases of their status as members of special populations (§122(c)(8)(B))*

*Program strategies for special populations that will enable them to meet or exceed state adjusted levels of performance and pursue further learning and high wage careers:*

Special populations students must have access to and successfully participate in the State's vocational education programs. To assure that such students have the opportunity to meet or exceed the state adjusted levels of performance, it is critical that strategies and services are in place to achieve success.

Special populations are defined by the Act as:

- Individuals with disabilities
- Individuals from economically disadvantaged families, including foster children
- Individuals preparing for nontraditional training and employment
- Single parents, including single pregnant women
- Displaced homemakers
- Individuals with other barriers to educational achievement, including individuals with limited English proficiency.

Proven strategies for assuring access to and success in vocational and technical education programs for special populations students include the following:

- Promoting outreach and recruitment information regarding career opportunities with an emphasis on nontraditional opportunities
- Identification of special population students
- Assessment of special population students enrolled in vocational and technical programs to determine their special needs
- Planning and coordinating supplemental services for special population students enrolled in vocational and technical education programs
- Facilitating the identification of appropriate adaptive equipment, assistive devices, and new technology for students with disabilities
- Providing in-service activities for vocational and technical teachers, counselors, and administrators
- Identifying and/or developing special instructional materials or adapting existing instructional materials for vocational and technical programs.

Local plan guidelines require that eligible recipients specify the strategies and services available to meet the needs of the special populations in vocational and technical education programs. Eligible recipients will ensure that strategies and services for members of special populations in vocational and technical education programs are appropriate.

Under Perkins II, several sex equity and single parent/displaced homemaker projects developed models of program services that may be replicated in other locations. These models will be collected and provided through inservice and technical assistance. Some of the strategies for single parents at the secondary level in particular are important to mention. Teen parents face significant challenges and barriers to completing high school and pursuing postsecondary education and entering the work force. Without appropriate interventions, educational and employment opportunities remain limited. Teen parents share many of the same social and economic barriers common to other special population students, in addition to being a parent to a small child. In addition to the strategies already identified above for all special population students, strategies to enable these particular students to prepare for further learning and for high skill, high wage careers may include the following:

- Exploration of career areas that focus on expanding career options, educational planning, and vocational training that is free of gender bias.
- Comprehensive career counseling and guidance, including labor market information, a broad range of occupations and alternative career paths, career testing, placement services for part-time and summer employment, internships, and cooperative programs.
- Access to options for specialization in a variety of areas with access to work-based learning opportunities.
- Career development activities that lead to mastery of career development competencies.
- High quality, paid work-based learning experiences to provide career exploration, enhancement of personal and interpersonal skills, and development of occupational skills.
- Promotion of academic courses in the areas of math and science to increase the likelihood of participation and completion of high wage occupational education and training.
- Access to programs that encourage learning all aspects of the industry, including planning, management, finances, technical production, and underlying principles of technology.
- Provide information on nontraditional jobs that offer higher pay and opportunities for advancement and benefits.

At the secondary level, these services may include supplementary services, guidance and counseling, and the vocational component of the transition plan for the special populations students in vocational and technical education programs.

A model pre-service training program for vocational teachers that helps teachers in working with and teaching special population students, including nontraditional, was developed by one of the regional educational cooperatives. Information regarding this model will be provided to all

districts under Perkins III. This pre-service training in effective teaching skills and practices is designed for all new vocational teachers. The program addresses the following issues: identifying special populations students; writing an Individualized Education Plan and legalities; teaching strategies to ensure success for special populations students; making modifications in the areas of curriculum, equipment, class environment, and instructional aids; effective practices in improving parental and community involvement (career action plans, advisory councils, and program marketing strategies); accountability for occupational programs; introducing career focus and requirements for each program area; utilizing course frameworks; utilizing student competency results to improve programs; training on utilization of media and resource center materials and equipment; and strategies for integration of vocational and academic education.

All the postsecondary community and technical colleges and institutions enroll students without regard to any discriminatory factors which might set students apart, and, after admission, the same high performance standards are expected of all students regardless of their backgrounds. In cases where students have special needs, each college offers supplementary services individually geared to those needs. For example, assistance to students with disabilities is available from a number of agencies in the community; financial aid is available for economically disadvantaged students; and courses in English as a foreign language are available for those having difficulties communicating in English. In addition, many institutions apply their local Perkins grants directly toward serving the special needs of students by funding individualized tutorial services, learning assistance labs, specialized reading programs, etc. These types of specialized support will ensure that the performance of special populations students on the state adjusted levels of performance will be comparable to that of non-special populations students.

*Description of how the needs of students in alternative education programs will be addressed, if appropriate:*

Most students in alternative education environments are enrolled in regular vocational education programs. Therefore, the needs of these students are not addressed separately.

*How funds will be used to serve individuals in state correctional institutions and in state institutions that serve persons with disabilities:*

The state will reserve up to 1% of the basic state grant under Section 112(a)(2)(A) from state leadership funds each year to serve persons in state correctional institutions or in state institutions that serve persons with disabilities. Eligible institutions must submit an application for funding, outlined below, no later than July 15 each year. Application approval and the level of funding will be determined by the Director of the Department, upon review, to ensure that the activities described in the application are of size, scope, and quality to be effective and are eligible activities for Perkins funding.



The application for funding includes the following sections:

- Introduction
- Statement of Need
- Project Description
  - Project Goals
  - Objectives Related to Each Goal
  - Activities Related to Each Objective
  - Outcomes
- Timeline for Conduct of the Project
- Budget
- Assurances and Certifications

**(i) Promoting Preparation for Nontraditional Training and Employment**

State leadership funds will be used to support teacher in-service training, recruitment efforts, curriculum development, and/or other services deemed effective in promoting participation in nontraditional training and employment.

The Department will have a staff member that will staff the nontraditional education and training unit and will develop a system to provide current local and national information on nontraditional vocations and high skill, high wage occupations. The individual will serve on the Department's technical assistance team and will provide leadership regarding equity and nontraditional activities to schools, as well as provide leadership and training to state occupational staff members that are providing on-site technical assistance to schools.

The Department has released a Request for Proposal (RFP) for approximately 20 mini-grants of up to \$2,500 each for projects that will promote nontraditional training and employment in secondary and postsecondary schools. These projects will be showcased at a workshop during the spring of 2000 and 2001 to help all districts and institutions gain ideas and strategies to promote nontraditional education programs and services for their students. In addition, inservice will be provided on strategies to help districts and institutions meet the performance indicators with regard to nontraditional training and employment. The Arkansas Workforce Education Curriculum Center will provide nontraditional education and training and equity resource materials for statewide use. The center will loan materials that provide information and technical assistance on nontraditional training and employment to local education agencies (LEAs).

Several activities initiated during the past year will be continued and have strong components that are designed to introduce students at the junior high school level to nontraditional careers.

*Project Learning Tree (PLT)*, designed to help junior high students in Career Orientation classes learn about forestry, also strives to help young people achieve lives that are respectful of all living things, including the environment. *PLT* creates opportunities for students to develop self-awareness. Using a problem-posing and problem-solving approach to instruction, *PLT* takes students beyond the fear of diversity and difference. Within this process students are encouraged to examine issues, identify what they believe to be bad choices, and share ideas about how these choices can be changed. *PLT* also incorporates hands-on activities that dispel stereotypical images of forestry as a male dominated profession in which success is dependent upon the physical strength and the ability to brave storms, fires, and other natural disasters. *PLT* curriculum and applied activities clearly confirm that the job duties and responsibilities of a forester can be easily performed by either gender.

*The Real Game*, an activity designed to work across the curriculum, adds relevance to, and incorporates such subject and skill areas as math, language arts, family life studies, social studies, decision making, communication, group work, analysis, self-awareness, and critical thinking. By using play-acting, written exercises, research projects, structured game activities, and interaction with classmates, teachers, parents, and community members, *The Real Game* provides a positive and supportive venue for young people to explore the emerging world of work. By learning how to cope with change while exploring the future in a realistic, but non-threatening way, students who participate in *The Real Game* develop a positive attitude about their roles within the new dynamic of the world of work. Through random student/occupation match-ups, the game allows students to investigate the nature of careers they might otherwise never consider. These random match-ups also teach the value of all work and that any occupation is appropriate if it suits personal goals and individual personalities. This is particularly important for students since it can expose them to nontraditional career possibilities. *The Real Game* is another activity used primarily in the junior high course of Career Orientation.

Another resource that became available just earlier this year is the [whatajob.com](http://whatajob.com) website for Arkansas. Introduced by Governor Huckabee as a tool to encourage movement of business/industry and people to the state, this website will be used to provide students with comprehensive information about Arkansas-based businesses, industries, and careers. The website includes an online job database containing an extensive job bank and a directory of all companies located in the state. Using photos to demonstrate the diversity of Arkansas' workforce, the website depicts a variety of successful people who are employed in nontraditional jobs. As a result, it is an excellent recruitment tool that enhances students' interest in pursuing nontraditional training and careers, particularly those that are high-tech and high paying.

## **ii. Discrimination Based on Status as Members of Special Populations**

Equal access to vocational and technical education programs may be demonstrated in a number of ways:

- Program enrollment has approximately the same make-up as enrollment of the total student body.
- Entry requirements do not adversely affect access for members of special populations to the programs.
- Special populations students are enrolled in all types of education programs including occupational specific courses, cooperative education, internships, apprenticeships, and Tech Prep 2+2 programs.

All students and their parents are provided with information about the opportunities in vocational education prior to entry in the ninth grade. In recent past years, almost 40 percent of the students enrolled in one or more vocational courses each year are reported as a member of a special population category. At the postsecondary level, approximately 35 percent of the students in the past two years were identified as a member of one of the special population categories.

Vocational and technical education programs and activities for individuals with disabilities will be provided in the least restrictive environment in accordance with Section 612(a)(5) of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and will, if appropriate, be included as a component of the individualized education program developed under Section 614(3) of that Act. Students with disabilities who have individualized education programs developed under Section 614(a) of the IDEA, with respect to vocational and technical education programs, will be afforded the rights and protections guaranteed those students under that Act. Efforts to meet the requirements are coordinated so services are complementary and provide the complete continuum of both programs and support activities to enable special populations students to be successful in vocational and technical education programs.

The State Board staff conducts Office of Civil Rights (OCR) on-site visits as described in this plan. The assurance of nondiscrimination will be required of eligible recipients through the development and submission of their local application for funding.

Technical assistance and professional development activities will also be provided by State staff and through leadership development activities in the area of nondiscrimination.

#### **(b) WIA Title I, Wagner-Peyser Act, and Veterans Programs**

*[Federal Planning Guidance: Address the following specific relevant populations: (Sections 112(b)(17)(A)(iv) and 112(b)(17)(B))*

- *Dislocated workers, including displaced homemakers*
- *Low-income individuals, including recipients of public assistance*
- *Individuals training for non-traditional employment*

- *Individuals with multiple barriers to employment (including older individuals, people with limited English-speaking ability, and people with disabilities)*
- *Veterans, including veterans' preferences under 38 U.S.C. Chapters 41 and 42*
- *The agricultural community that serves the migrant and seasonal farm worker population*
- *UI claimants who are identified under Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services]*

All employment and training activities conducted within the workforce investment system will be coordinated and approved by the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board. Universal access is key to the success of the one-stop career development system. Some individuals have special needs in order to have this access. Special needs of the following populations will be served in several ways.

Members of groups with special needs will be provided the full array of services defined in the Workforce Investment Act, Wagner-Peyser, and Veterans regulations. Many of these individuals will need assistance in moving through the one-stop process. Some will need special assessment. Others will need counseling and intensive services from staff who understand their special needs. These services will be provided by and/or coordinated by appropriate partners.

Through the workforce investment system, employment and training services will be provided to meet the needs of the identified special population groups, as well as to other populations through universal access. Local workforce investment boards, under the guidance of the state board, will determine priorities for the use in funds. In accordance with WIA Section 134(d)(4)(E), priority for adult intensive services and training services will be extended to recipients of public assistance and other low-income individuals in the local area. Procedures for administering this priority are being developed by the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board.

This prioritization will address the State's need to develop the skills of current workers, raise the educational attainment rate of the workforce, and increase personal income, while simultaneously meeting the federal legislative intent to assist disadvantaged individuals. This strategy also avoids duplication of services by ensuring that resources of the Department of Human Services (DHS) are prioritized for their intended purpose, while WIA funds are used for low income individuals who either do not qualify or who have already been initially served and placed in work through TANF, food stamps, or through other programs such as Community Action Agencies, or other funds that may be available in a local area.

Funds allocated for dislocated workers are not subject to the priority requirement. The priority requirement does not mean that only recipients of public assistance and other low-income individuals may receive WIA Title I adult funded training services when funds are determined to be limited in a local area. The local workforce investment board shall establish a process that gives priority for services to the recipients of public assistance and other low-income individuals

and which also serves other individuals meeting the eligibility requirements for such training services. Reference Section II.F.1(c), vi, Funding, for the priority ranking.

- *Older Individuals*

Every One-Stop in Arkansas includes at least one partner who is a recipient of funds from Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965. Staff of these partners will assist and coordinate services to older individuals. Coordination will be made with partners who represent other programs, such as WIA Title I, in order to best serve these individuals. In most cases, these individuals will receive short-term training in order to facilitate immediate employment. Employment will include, but will not be limited to, part-time employment.

- *People with Disabilities*

Staff representing Vocational Rehabilitation services will be located in each One-Stop to serve the needs of workers with disabilities. This staff will serve as a focal point for providing needed services. All One-Stop facilities must be in compliance with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and be fully accessible to individuals with disabilities.

Representatives of Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS) will continue to be available at all Arkansas Employment Security Department (AESD) offices. AESD expects to continue its working agreement with ARS to ensure that the full range of services is available to all workers with disabilities. These services will supplement the services of full One-Stop centers.

All services provided to customers under the Wagner-Peyser Act are made available to people with disabilities. Each full service location has one employee designated to take the lead in providing those services. That person is expected to develop a well-rounded knowledge of services available in the local community and to be able to provide direct assistance to customers. That employee also offers assistance to other staff and partner organizations in assuring that a full range of services are provided. When necessary, licensed interpreters or assistive devices may be provided. All service locations are accessible to persons with disabilities.

The process described in the preceding paragraph applies to all customers with disabilities, including those with visual impairments. The person designated as the coordinator of services to people with disabilities in each service location will maintain contact with the Department of State Services to the Blind (DSB) and will assure that those with visual impairments are provided the full range of service available under the Wagner-Peyser Act and are also directed to other partners who may be able to provide other types of service.

- *Veterans, including veterans' preferences under 38 U.S.C. Chapters 41 and 42.*

All appropriate agencies will cooperate with the U.S. Department of Labor Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS) to guarantee appropriate services to veterans. Arkansas Employment Security Department (AESD) will monitor performance to ensure that the performance standards agreed to by AESD and the VETS state director are met. Veterans who meet the job-related selection criteria established by an employer will be given first consideration for all AESD job referrals. Operations in One-Stops will comply with all federal requirements for providing veterans services. AESD local office managers, supervisors, and career development staff will ensure that the services described herein are offered to all veterans and other eligible persons within the area served by each office or center.

- AESD staff will encourage all job-seeking veterans and other eligible persons to file a complete application for employment, ensuring that all veterans receive maximum exposure to all appropriate employment and training opportunities.
- As appropriate, AESD staff will personally interview veterans and other eligible persons to review and analyze the information on their applications, ensure that all of their qualifications for employment are adequately presented, determine any need for employment counseling, identify occupationally significant facts, select suitable job choices, and suggest job search techniques.
- Signs will be posted in all One-Stop centers reminding job applicants to identify themselves as veterans, as appropriate. Verification of veteran status will be made during initial contact with applicants.
- As appropriate, qualified AESD staff will discuss with veterans and other eligible persons, on a priority basis, their present and potential qualifications for work, alternative choices, and their plans to achieve their occupational and training goals. If necessary, and to the extent possible, staff members will also provide such applicants with assistance in solving problems directly related to obtaining or retaining jobs.
- As appropriate, and to the extent that resources permit, qualified staff will administer objective aptitude and proficiency tests to veterans and other eligible persons as a complement to selection and referral to jobs or training.
- As appropriate, veterans and other eligible persons will be referred to supportive services available within the community. Such services may include medical and legal aid, childcare, transportation assistance, and other services that are likely to eliminate barriers to employment and training.
- As appropriate, job openings will be developed for veterans and other eligible persons on a priority basis through employer contacts and by other means whenever suitable job openings are not available.

The following order of priority in making referrals to employment and training opportunities will be followed when there is more than one applicant qualified for a job or training opening: (1) qualified special disabled veterans, (2) qualified veterans of the Vietnam era, (3) qualified disabled veterans other than special disabled veterans, (4) all other qualified veterans and other eligible persons, and (5) qualified non-veterans.

Access to Local Veterans' Employment Representative (LVER) and Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) staff will be provided through the One-Stop centers if such is requested by a veteran or other eligible person. LVER and DVOP staff will work at the direction of the AESD office manager and will serve veterans and other eligible persons only. LVER staff, as functional supervisors for veterans' services, will make spot checks and quarterly evaluations and report their findings to the AESD office manager. DVOP and LVER staff will provide technical assistance to ensure priority of services to veterans in accordance with Title 38 U.S. Code, Chapters 41 and 42. LVER and DVOP staff will conduct outreach to employers, community agencies, veterans' organizations, and other similar groups and share information gained from these contacts with the staff at service delivery points. Case management services for veterans and other eligible persons will be provided by LVER and DVOP staff when appropriate and staff resources are available.

- *The agricultural community that serves the migrant and seasonal farm worker population*

The Monitor Advocate will strive to provide an effective labor exchange service delivery system for agricultural communities across the state by developing strategies on enhancing and measuring employment services provided through the One-Stop centers. Activities will include assessing needs of agricultural employers and job seekers, providing outreach services to inform customers of services being provided through one stop centers, and developing customer orientations on using electronic self-assistance tools in resource centers. Please see Attachment MSFW for additional information concerning the Arkansas State Plan for Agricultural Services Program Year 2000.

- *UI claimants who are identified under Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services*

UI claimants who are identified under Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services: All unemployment insurance (UI) claimants who are not attached to a specific employer must register for employment services at AESD local offices in order to meet UI eligibility requirements, and UI staff refers claimants to employment service (ES) staff for these services. ES staff confirms the claimant's registration either by completing a new application or by updating and renewing the claimant's existing application. Reemployment assistance will be provided to UI claimants by offering them all the traditional employment services, such as job referrals, job-seeker information, and referrals for supportive services using the three-tiered

strategy. Information obtained in fulfilling the work test requirements, that may bear on a UI claimant's responsibility to work, including information that may disqualify the claimant will be promptly reported to UI staff. The claimant's ES application and record of services received are also available on-line for UI staff to view.

The Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services system will continue for unemployment insurance (UI) claimants who are considered to be likely to exhaust their UI benefits. Intrastate UI claimants establishing a new benefit year who have been issued a first payment for regular benefits and are not participating in shared work activities are identified through this program as claimants needing reemployment services. Information collected about this selected group contains several categorical data elements that may be used as potential independent variables. A logistic regression equation developed from historical UI claimant characteristic data is used to calculate the probability that current UI claimants who have drawn a first payment will exhaust their benefits before obtaining employment. "Profiled" claimants with a probability index of 50 percent or higher are placed in a separate pool for no longer than six weeks.

Based on the probability of exhausting benefits and the training slots available, a claimant in the pool may be asked to attend a job search workshop. The claimant is required to complete the workshop training only one time. During this six-week period, if a claimant is asked to attend the workshop and refuses without good reason, the claimant can be denied UI benefits for that week.

All selected profiles are directed to report to the nearest local office for assessment, registration for employment services, and referral to a WIA training service provider. A ranked listing of claimants is generated for each local office. If a local office is unable to serve all the claimants referred, the balance will be left in a profiling pool and ranked again with claimants profiled during the following weeks, for a maximum of six weeks. Claimants not selected for proscribed reemployment services by the sixth week will be dropped from the profiling system.

The tracking and feedback system for this program has as a primary goal the measurement of success in achieving positive employment outcomes through early intervention. Additionally, feedback to UI staff includes information about claimant participation in the prescribed reemployment services that are a condition of eligibility for UI benefits.

### **(c) Adult Education and Family Literacy**

*[Federal Planning Guidance: Address the following specific relevant populations:*

- *Low income students (§224(b)(10)(A))*
- *Individuals with disabilities (§224(b)(10)(B))*
- *Single parents and displaced homemakers (§224(b)(10)(C))*



- *Individuals with multiple barriers to educational enhancement, including individuals with limited English proficiency (§224(b)(10)(D))*
- *Criminal offenders in correctional institutions and other institutionalized individuals (§225)*
- *Low income students*

Since the 1992-93 program year, the literacy councils in Arkansas have had direct and equitable access to federal adult education funds. Their Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs provide one-on-one tutoring services to educationally disadvantaged adults.

The number of low-income students will also be positively impacted by the implementation of Arkansas Department of Workforce Education (ADWE) programs such as the Workforce Alliance for Growth in the Economy (WAGE), a pre-employability program that targets low-income, unemployed, and underemployed adults in Arkansas. This program is designed for local adult education programs to develop business and industry partnerships in the local community that promote and support classes that teach the basic academic skills needed to perform entry-level positions in those workplaces. Adult educators are trained to complete literacy task analyses of entry-level positions within the partnering businesses and industries, and use those analyses to develop curriculum and instructional strategies and teach basic academic skills within the context of the job. The WAGE program incorporates an alliance among:

- Business and industry
- DHS
- Employment Security Department (ESD)
- Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) Title I
- Local education agencies
- Local employer advisory councils
- Adult education services
- Employment and training agencies
- Industrial development foundations
- County and city governments

The WAGE program is complemented by the partnership of DWE with the Department of Human Services (DHS) to provide basic skills remediation for Transitional Employment Assistance (TEA) clients who score below the ninth-grade level on the Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE). As the welfare roll decreases through both job placement and pre-employability basic academic skills training, Arkansas should see a reduction in the percentage of students who are low-income.

- *Individuals With Disabilities*

Individuals with disabilities can be divided into the following categories:

- Individuals with cognitive disabilities (either developmental or learning disabilities)
- Physical disabilities (orthopedic)
- Sensory disabilities (hearing or sight impaired)
- Medical disabilities (long-term medical conditions requiring medical support, medicines, or other accommodations)
- Mental disorders (such as psychological and emotional disorders)

Some of these individuals will be integrated into regular adult education classes and programs; others will be provided educational services in separate groupings or sites. For example, DWE funds a program for adults at the Arkansas School for the Deaf. Those who need referrals to other service providers for additional or more appropriate services will be provided with the appropriate referral.

Two types of educational services will be provided:

- Reasonable accommodations and
- Instructional strategies.

Accommodations usually refers to modified equipment and/or materials but can also include things such as physical access to programs and extended time to complete assessments or assignments. Instructional strategies will include a variety of groupings and techniques to address different learning styles and mandatory modalities.

In 1994 DWE established a task force to guide a statewide training initiative in learning disabilities (LD). This initiative has provided training for local teachers, tutors, and administrators about LD, the Payne and Jordan screening tools, Irlen screening, Power Path screening, and developmental vision screening conducted in partnership with the Arkansas Optometric Association and Arkansas Rehabilitation Services. Beginning in 1995, the DWE funded a position in the Arkansas Adult Learning Resource Center (AALRC) to facilitate and oversee this initiative. This position (learning disabilities project manager) will be gradually expanded to include support, training, and coordination of services that include all disabilities--not just learning disabilities.

There is an advisory committee for the AALRC-LD initiative, as well as an advisory committee for the AALRC, comprised of state and local adult education and literacy council personnel, all of whom will continue to help guide the disabilities initiatives with the ADWE-ASE and AALRC staff. The AALRC training initiatives in the area of disabilities will continue to focus on:

- Increasing the disabilities awareness level of practitioners and administrators regarding the range of educational adjustments, modified instructional strategies, and employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities
- Encouraging the practice of teaching specifically to the diverse learning styles and mandatory modalities presented by individuals with disabilities
- Increasing the disabilities awareness regarding the opportunities available at the post-secondary level
- Increasing the level of knowledge about assistive technology, its educational applications, and employment adaptability
- Increasing comprehensive and coordinated services for individuals with disabilities in Arkansas.

It is important to show accountability for implementation of tools and knowledge in the services provided by local programs for adults with disabilities. There is a need for statistical proof that:

- Programs are meeting the ADA and Section 504 requirements for responsibility and that the screening tools are effective
- The referral process and increased collaboration results in more appropriate service provision for adults with disabilities
- Programs are incorporating appropriate instructional methods, materials, and accommodations
- Those students who are entitled to testing accommodations are provided with those accommodations.

The AALRC has created and distributed student tracking sheets and quarterly tracking sheets to all adult education and literacy providers who have received training in learning disabilities for the purpose of tracking student statistical information. Those tracking sheets are to be submitted on a quarterly basis to the AALRC learning disabilities project manager.

The Arkansas Adult Education Funding Application will begin to address the need for accountability in the area of disabilities with the inclusion of specific performance indicators.

- *Single parents and displaced homemakers*

Adult education services are provided to single parents and displaced homemakers in programs such as WAGE, workforce education, English as a Second Language (ESL), family literacy, welfare to work, and Adult Basic Education/General Adult Education (ABE/GAE) programs. Adult education programs will continue to work with other agencies that serve this population to find ways to collaborate and improve services.

There is a collaborative effort in Arkansas between the Single Parent/Displaced Homemaker Program and the DWE which is coordinated and funded by the DWE. Other collaborating partners include technical institutes, technical colleges, vocational technical schools, community colleges, state colleges and universities, and the WAGE program. This program assisted over 1,827 participants in Arkansas in 1996-97 as a result of current legislation under the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1990. The goal of the program is to help participants achieve economic self-sufficiency. In 1996-97, 475 of the 1,827 participants were placed in ABE/GED programs.

There will also be an increase in adult education/literacy services provided to the single parent/displaced homemaker population as a direct result of the TEA client referral process previously described in this State Unified Plan.

- *Individuals with multiple barriers to educational enhancement, including individuals with limited English proficiency*

From July 1, 1997 through May 31, 1998, there were 3,711 adults enrolled in ESL programs for a total of 176,040 contact hours. It is expected that the 1997 enrollment of ESL students will be surpassed because of projected growth in the ESL population in Arkansas, especially the Hispanic population.

Efforts by DWE to provide appropriate services for the rapidly growing ESL population in Arkansas has been guided by a task force comprised of state and local adult education and literacy council personnel. Much of the effort has focused on providing staff development to local teachers and tutors. This task force will continue to explore ESL issues, materials, and needs to provide recommendations to the DWE and Arkansas Adult Literacy Resource Center (AALRC) staff.

DWE is prepared to meet the challenge of providing ESL classes to meet the needs of business, industry, and local communities throughout the state. The AALRC will provide teacher training and staff development necessary for those who provide services for ESL students.

- *Criminal offenders in correctional institutions and other institutionalized individuals*

#### Types of Programs:

Funds are available under section 222 (a) (1) of the WIA for a fiscal year. DWE shall not exceed a maximum of ten percent of the 82.5 percent of the federal grant to provide corrections education or education for other institutionalized individuals, including academic programs.

Funds shall be used for the cost of educational programs for criminal offenders in correctional institutions and for other institutionalized individuals, including academic programs for:

- Basic education
- Special education programs as determined by the eligible agency
- English literacy programs
- Secondary school credit programs.

Priority:

DWE will give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institutional within five years of participation in the program.

Types of Institutional Settings: Correctional institution means any:

- Prison
- Jail
- Reformatory
- Work farm
- Detention center
- Half-way house, community-based rehabilitation center, or other similar institution designed for the confinement or rehabilitation of criminal offenders.

• *Other*

DWE will continue to fund Arkansas Educational Television Network (AETN) broadcasts of *GED On TV*, *Another Page*, and *Math Basics* with coordinated help from certified teachers available by phone. One of the reasons this program was originally funded in 1988 was to provide assistance for people who were not able to attend local adult education classes because of problems with childcare or transportation, both of which continue to be barriers for many adults needing adult education. This program provides services for many of the clients referred by DHS.

DWE will continue to collaborate on providing services with agencies such as the Department of Human Services, Employment Security Department, Department of Education, and Arkansas Rehabilitation Services.

**(d) TAA and NAFTA-TAA**

*[Federal Planning Guidance: Describe how rapid response and basic readjustment services authorized under other Federal laws will be provided to trade-impacted workers.]*

The Governor's Dislocated Worker Task Force, made up of the Department of Workforce Education, the Employment Security Department, the AFL-CIO and the Department of Economic Development, has been appointed by the Governor to provide rapid response services in Arkansas. The Task Force would provide the required rapid response activities for dislocated workers and trade-impacted workers, as outlined in the Workforce Investment Act at Subpart B, Sec, 665.310 as follows:

- On-site contact with the employer, representatives of the affected workers, and the local community, which may include an assessment of the:
  - Layoff plans and schedule of the employer;
  - Potential for averting the layoff(s) in consultation with State or local economic development agencies, including private sector economic development entities;
  - Background and probable assistance needs of the affected workers;
  - Reemployment prospects for workers in the local community; and
  - Available resources to meet the short and long-term assistance needs of the affected workers;
- The provision of information and access to unemployment compensation benefits, comprehensive One-Stop system services, and employment and training activities, including information and enrollment in the Trade Adjustment Assistance program and the NAFTA-TAA program;
- The provision of guidance and/or financial assistance in establishing a labor-management committee voluntarily agreed to by labor and management, or a workforce transition committee comprised of representatives of the employer, the affected workers and the community. The committee may devise and oversee an implementation strategy that responds to the reemployment needs of the workers. The assistance to this committee may include:
  - The provision of training and technical assistance to members of the committee;
  - Funding the operating costs of a committee to enable it to provide advice and assistance in carrying out rapid response activities and in the design and delivery of WIA-authorized services to affected workers. Typically, such support will last no longer than six months; and

- Providing a list of potential candidates to serve as a neutral chairperson of the committee.
- The provision of emergency assistance adapted to the particular closing, layoff or disaster.
- The provision of assistance to the local board and chief elected official(s) to develop a coordinated response to the dislocation event and, as needed, obtain access to State economic development assistance. Such coordinated response may include the development of an application for a National Emergency Grant under 20 CFR part 671. (WIA Section 101(38) and 134(a (2)(A.))

The Task Force will also provide the additional services outlined in Section 665.320 and the rapid response required activities at Sec. 665.330 for workers who are affected under the NAFTA Worker Security Act.

The Workforce Investment Board is operating under the expectation that ESD will administer funding and administer programs for Title I under WIA. The Task Force operates under ESD; therefore ESD will provide rapid response services as identified above. The Task Force partners are appointed by the Governor and have been reappointed by the current Governor. Therefore no change is expected.

The Task Force will set up a Planning Meeting in the city of dislocation in order to coordinate services with the local board, city officials, etc. The Task Force will compile an invitation list and invite local leaders and interested parties to the Planning Meeting. The list will include a representative from the company, the union or other employee organization, the AOC, the Mayor(s), County Judge(s), State legislators, Chamber of Commerce representative(s), local WIA operator(s), local educational representatives, and any others who may be interested. The Task Force Coordinator and planning meeting participants will determine what services are needed and develop a plan for serving the affected workers.

#### **(e) Vocational Rehabilitation**

*[Federal Planning Guidance: Address minorities with most significant disabilities (§21(c))]*

#### **ARKANSAS REHABILITATION SERVICES (ARS)**

##### **Program Strategies To Target And Serve Special Populations**

The Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS) emphasizes the priority of serving the persons with the most severe disabilities and maintains an aggressive outreach program to persons who are minorities.

The agency has established and supports a cultural diversity task force which examines issues related to serving minorities, recommends policy and procedure changes to assure that outreach activities are effective, and provides training to staff regarding minority outreach and other concerns.

Key staff within ARS has received training on cultural diversity issues. The key staff will continue to provide training to remaining staff in the coming year.

Agency staff serves as liaisons to minority institutions/organizations. In this capacity, they provide information about rehabilitation services and recruit clients.

Recruiting efforts for agency staff focus advertising in minority publications, and the agency has an effective employment opportunity program for hiring minorities. Colleges and Universities which prepare rehabilitation professionals and which are traditionally minority institutions are a focus of recruitment efforts.

Caseload statistics are closely monitored, with one of the areas of focus being the number of minorities being served. The ARS caseloads typically show representation by minorities at significantly higher levels than the distribution of minorities in the general population.

ARS played a key role in assisting the University of Arkansas Pine Bluff (UAPB), which is a historically minority university, in successfully acquiring a grant from the Rehabilitation Services Administration to establish an undergraduate Rehabilitation Science Program.

#### **DIVISION OF SERVICES TO THE BLIND (DSB)**

##### **OUTREACH PROCEDURES FOR IDENTIFYING AND SERVING INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES WHO ARE MINORITIES AND UNSERVED AND UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS**

The Arkansas Division of Services for the Blind places major emphasis on the needs of consumers who are most significantly disabled as a priority for services. DSB also places priority on identifying and serving consumers who are minorities or who have been unserved or underserved.



DSB has obtained and disseminated directories of minority groups and organizations to each DSB field office. The small business directory has also been obtained and disseminated. The directories may provide service delivery options to DSB customers and staff. Providing these options from a diverse provider pool also creates an indirect method of informing a diverse population of DSB and services. A second advantage to utilizing a diverse pool of providers is that it may also create job opportunities for DSB clients.

A Field Services Supervisor is designated to assist counselors in the provision of services to persons who are deaf/blind. The Field Supervisor will continue to work closely with the Helen Keller National Center and the Office of the Deaf and Hearing Impaired in the provision of services to deaf/blind clients. The Field Supervisor works closely with the Deaf/Blind Task Force to obtain and share information regarding service delivery to persons who are deaf/blind. The Speech and Hearing Department of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR) has been and will continue to be utilized to provide services to persons who are deaf/blind. Cooperative agreements will be developed and updated to facilitate service delivery.

The Division of Services for the Blind provides full accommodation to individuals who are blind or visually impaired, such as interpreters for individuals who are deaf-blind, Braille, large print, computer disk, and other available technology that will allow access to information.

The Division of Services for the Blind is in the process of identifying areas of the State which are believed to be historically unserved or underserved and restructuring the field service program to effectively bring needed services to those areas. The Division of Services for the Blind is also considering opening an office in one of the underserved areas to better serve consumers in that region.

Since Arkansas has a rapidly growing population of culturally diverse individuals, DSB is in the process of developing and restructuring current policies so the agency will be able to provide all applicants with needed information in their native language. At the present time, DSB will contract with interpreters of native language on a needed basis. The Division of Services for the Blind will also supply individuals who need written information in their native language with necessary written translations such as the IPE, Due Process, CAP, and other necessary information.

DSB will continue efforts to improve service delivery to minorities and persons who are unserved and underserved through the following efforts.

- Continue to participate in career fairs at colleges in the state and to target Historically Black Colleges and Universities, and colleges with predominately minority enrollment.

- Contact and establish a working relationship with the minority student director of each university and college.
- Continue to serve on the grant development council of the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (UAPB) to share information and complement staff skills in grant acquisition related to successful employment outcomes for minority students with disabilities.
- Continue to expand staff knowledge of culturally diverse populations through training.
- Collaborate with other agencies and organizations in providing services to unserved, underserved, and minorities in achieving employment outcomes and independence.
  
- Provide DSB public awareness presentations to minority churches, social service organizations, consumer groups, fraternal organizations, etc.
- Provide interpreters as needed for hearing impaired and non-English speaking blind customers.
- Continue to coordinate service delivery, to share information, establish working groups, and develop a reciprocal referral network.
- To publish job announcements and service delivery information in a non-traditional news media, such as a minority owned newspapers and the DSB website.

**OVERCOME IDENTIFIED BARRIERS RELATING TO EQUITABLE ACCESS TO, AND PARTICIPATION OF, INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES PROGRAM AND THE STATE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM**

The Arkansas Division of Services for the Blind policies prohibit discrimination against individuals because of race, gender, national origin, color, disability, or age. The Division of Services for the Blind Field Policy Manual includes policies that assure equitable access and participation for individuals who are blind or visually impaired on a non-discriminatory basis as defined in the VR Field Manual (Section 4, Page VR 4.03) which states eligibility requirements must be applied without regard to age, gender, race, color, creed, national origin, or type of disability of the applicant. Even though DSB does not discriminate against types of disabilities, the individual must meet the visual requirements to be eligible.

DSB recruiting efforts for new agency staff include advertising nationally on a non-discriminatory basis and working actively to maintain a professional workforce to include hiring minorities in a ratio reflective of the Arkansas population. This includes working effectively with colleges and universities that historically serve a minority population with emphasis upon those which produce rehabilitation professionals. The Division actively recruits at these institutions for new employees.

**(f) TANF**

[Federal Planning Guidance: Indicate whether the State intends to:

- *Treat families moving into the State from another State differently than other families under the program, and if so, how the State intends to treat such families under the program.]*

Families who move from other states are treated the same as current residents. (Section 6.7 of Arkansas' Title IV-A State Plan)

[Federal Planning Guidance: Indicate whether the State intends to:

- *[Provide assistance under the program to individuals who are not citizens of the United States, and if so, shall include an overview of such assistance. (Sec. 402(a)(1)(B)(i) and (ii))]*

Recipients must be citizens of the United States of America; or qualified aliens lawfully present in the United States before August 22, 1996; or aliens to whom public benefits must be provided by federal law; or aliens who entered the United States on or after August 22, 1996 and have been in "qualified alien" status for at least five (5) years. (Section 3.5 of Arkansas' Title IV-A State Plan)

[Federal Planning Guidance: Outline how the State intends to conduct a program designed to reach State and local law enforcement officials, the education system, and relevant counseling services, that provides education and training on the problem of statutory rape so that teenage pregnancy prevention programs may be expanded in scope to include men. (Sec. 401(a)(1)(A)(vi))]

A minor parent under the age of 16 is referred to the Division of Children and Family Services if sexual abuse is suspected.

**(g) SCSEP**

[Federal Planning Guidance: Address the following specific relevant populations:]

- *Minority groups*

Recruitment procedures will ensure equitable participation by minorities, persons with limited English speaking ability, and those with the greatest economic need.

- *Individuals with the greatest economic need*

ESD and the AAAs will use eligibility criteria established by the Department of Labor. The ESD office will determine eligibility prior to referring applicants to appropriate AAAs.

The Title V Coordinator of the AAA will select applicants for enrollment according to the following priorities:

1. Eligible individuals who are in the greatest economic need
  2. Eligible individuals who are 60 years or older
  3. Enrollees seeking re-enrollment following termination of an unsubsidized job through no fault of their own or due to illness, if re-enrollment is sought within one year of termination
- *Individuals with poor employment prospects*

Within all priorities, first consideration will be given to those eligible individuals with poor employment prospects.

### **(h)CSBG**

[Federal Planning Guidance: Address the following specific relevant populations:

- *[Low-income families*
- *Families and individuals receiving assistance under part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act (42U.S.C. 601 et seq.)*
- *Homeless families and individuals*
- *Migrant or seasonal farm workers*
- *Elderly low-income individuals and families*
- *Youth in low-income communities]*

Federal regulations, assurances signed by the Governor and CSBG policy stipulate CSBG funds will be provided to support activities that are designed to assist low-income families and individuals, including families and individuals receiving assistance under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U. S. C. 601 et seq.), homeless families and individuals, migrant or seasonal farm workers, and elderly low-income families to become self-sufficient.

Community Services Block Grant funds are also provided to address the needs of youth in low-income communities through youth development programs that support the primary role of the family, give priority to the prevention of youth problems and crime, and promote increased community coordination and collaboration in meeting the needs of youth and support development and expansion of innovative community-based youth development programs that have demonstrated success in preventing or reducing youth crime, such as programs for the establishment of violence-free zones that would involve youth development and intervention models (such as models involving youth mediation, youth mentoring, life skills training, job creation, entrepreneurship programs, and after-school programs).

## **2. Methods of Collecting Data and Reporting Progress**

*[Federal Planning Guidance: Identify the methods of collecting data and reporting progress on the special populations described in Question 1 of this section.]*

Data concerning special populations will be collected using the common intake system described in Part L of the State Unified Plan.

### **3. Equal Access**

*[Federal Planning Guidance: If your plan includes Perkins III, Tech-Prep, Adult Education and Family Literacy or Vocational Rehabilitation, describe the steps the eligible agency will take to ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, projects or activities carried out with the respective funds by addressing the special needs of student, teachers, and other program beneficiaries in order to overcome barriers to equitable participation, including barriers based on gender, race, color, national origin, disability, and age. (Sec. 427(b) General Education Provisions Act.)]*

#### **ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY**

##### Description of Activities under Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA):

Programs that apply for funding from the Arkansas Department of Workforce Education, Adult Education Section, have access to the resources, training, and materials available from the Arkansas Adult Learning Resource Center (AALRC). The AALRC is responsible for providing information, materials, resources, and training to local programs to assist in ensuring equitable access to and participation in those programs, including all students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries.

All local programs are required to post public notices that address non-discrimination policies regarding accessibility and participation regardless of gender, race, national origin age, or religion, in accordance with the Civil Rights Act.

Local programs are required to provide on-going information to applicants, participants, beneficiaries, and other interested parties regarding the rights of people under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and Title II applications to their particular programs, services, and activities. Methods of providing information include publication in handbooks, manuals, and enrollment and application materials that are distributed to the public to describe the local program and its activities. Other methods include the display of informational posters in local programs and other public places and/or information broadcast on

television or radio. Public notice of ADA requirements must be made available in alternative formats to meet the diverse communication needs of persons with disabilities.

Since 1995 the AALRC has specifically addressed two major barriers to program access in Arkansas: (1) disabilities and, (2) limited English proficiency. Steps taken to address these barriers to access:

Description of Steps:

- Disabilities
  - Provide in-depth training about learning disabilities to all programs.
  - Assist programs in complying with legal requirements as mandated by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the ADA, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Assistance includes providing information, training, and resources.
  - Assist programs in coordinating with other state agencies and organizations that provide services and resources for individuals with disabilities, such as the Office for the Deaf and Hearing Impaired (ODHI), Increasing Capabilities Access Network (ICAN), and Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS).
  - Provide training to a variety of state agencies and organizations about learning disabilities and how to coordinate services, including screening, diagnosis, materials and resources, strategies and accommodations, and referrals. Provide training and information to all State General Educational Development (GED) Test examiners about requesting and receiving accommodations on the GED Tests.
  - Provide assistance to local programs in the administration of other tests and instructional materials with accommodations.
  - Work with publishing companies to ensure test materials used in adult education and literacy programs are available in alternative formats, *e.g.*, audiocassette, Braille, large-print, etc., to accommodate students with disabilities. Also, work with those publishing companies to ensure that the tests have been field-tested and conform to test norms for adults with disabilities populations. This effort is already underway with CTB McGraw-Hill regarding the Tests for Adult Basic Education (TABE).
  - Continue to coordinate training efforts with University Affiliated Programs to provide training in the ADA for local service providers.
  - Create a seamless, statewide system which ensures that any adult education or literacy student with possible undiagnosed learning disabilities will have access to diagnostic assessment; that local programs providing services know how to access the statewide system; and that the system includes an agreed-to protocol regarding gender, race,

- national origin, color, disability, or age, to ensure equitable accessibility and participation. This project is currently underway with funding from the National Institute for Literacy, and should be completed by October 2000.
- Assist local programs in the provision of instructional materials available in alternative formats, as well as assisting in the implementation of accommodated instruction for students with disabilities.
  - Assist local programs in the acquisition of technology devices that assist accommodated instruction and assessment for students with disabilities.
- Limited English Proficiency:
    - Continue to provide on-going training in using the Basic English Skills Test (BEST) for local program assessment for students with limited English proficiency.
    - Provide training in using the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) as an alternative competency-based assessment for students with limited English proficiency.
    - Continue to provide comprehensive, in-depth training for teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) in adult education and literacy programs. The training includes awareness, assessments, and specific instructional strategies and materials.
    - Continue to distribute ESL “toolkits” that include dictionaries for other languages and electronic dictionaries.
    - Develop a comprehensive supply of instructional materials designed for GED preparation and basic skills that are published in Spanish and French for students who plan to take the GED Tests in a language other than English.
    - Promote and assist local programs in distributing program information in other languages; including, but not restricted to, pamphlets, fliers, radio and television public-service announcements, and newspaper advertisements.

## **ARKANSAS REHABILITATION SERVICES (ARS)**

### **Equal Access and Treatment (Section 427)**

By law all Arkansas state agencies, including ARS, do not discriminate against any individual because of gender, race, color, national origin, disability or age. ARS meets the spirit and letter of ADA, Section 504 and other applicable sections of the Rehabilitation Act in relation to client services and personnel practices. ARS fully supports policy and procedures of non-discrimination regarding gender, race, national origin, color, disability or age through the application of the ARS Rehabilitation Services Operating Policy (RSOP) manual. Laws with which ARS must have full compliance referenced in the RSOP include the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998, the Individuals with Disabilities

Education Act of 1975, as amended, the American with Disabilities Act of 1990 and other Federal and State laws.

ARS promotes hiring policies that encourage cultural diversity in staff and sensitivity to those issues in delivery of services to clients. ARS employs counselors and other staff with varying backgrounds regarding race, national origin, and disability. Of the 74 counselors, 6 have known disabilities and 12 are from culturally diverse backgrounds. VR counselors sensitive to cultural diversity and disability issues thereby improve their ability to deal positively and productively with clients and thereby create an equitable environment. All clients and staff, and in particular those with disabilities and from culturally diverse backgrounds, have equitable access to the services without bias to gender, race, national origin, color, disability or age. Full accommodation, such as interpreters for the deaf, accessible media, appropriate modes of communication and native languages when appropriate, will be provided to individuals who have disabilities.

ARS has a Cultural Diversity Task Force to address diversity in all aspects of ARS operations. Recruitment issues including reaching out to individuals with disabilities and those from culturally diverse backgrounds are addressed by the Task Force. Also, issues involving equitable provision of services to clients regarding individuals with disabilities and those from culturally diverse backgrounds are addressed by the Task Force.